

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected all of the outstanding claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over MITSUME et al. in view of YAMASHITA et al. In view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks, applicant respectfully traverses.

The claimed specific density difference is obtained from a plurality of density differences, and the specific density difference is applied to the reference density of the image. This eliminates a complicated algorithm, thereby accelerating the whole process. Although the YAMASHITA reference teaches comparing the image data and the reference data to obtain the difference in density, the density difference is then applied to the comparator 18, where the density difference is differentiated and the absolute value of the density difference is obtained (col. 5, lines 26 - 34). Further, since the YAMASHITA reference is silent about obtaining a plurality of density differences to determine a specific density difference, the YAMASHITA reference is silent about applying the specific density difference to a reference density to generate a pattern-erased image. MITSUME et al. does not supply the deficiencies of YAMASHITA et al. Consequently, the present invention would not result from the combination of the MITSUME reference and the YAMASHITA reference.

New claims 11 and 12 do not add any prohibited new matter. Moreover, claims 11 and 12 are believed to be allowable over the applied prior art.

Dependent claims 2 - 6 and 8 - 12 are also believed to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations. For example, claims 5 and 10 determine the specific density difference based upon a mean value. YAMASHITA et al. do not discuss or suggest calculating a mean value of the density differences between the reference pixel and the comparison pixels. Accordingly, applicant

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respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

The above amendments have been presented merely for the purpose of clarification, and not to overcome the applied prior art. Accordingly, no estoppel is deemed to result from any of the present amendments.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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October 1, 2003
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